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History and Constitution

OF THE


LADIES' SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION

OF

EDUCATION AT THE WEST.

HISTORY
OF
THE FORMATION
OF
THE LADIES' SOCIETY
FOR THE
PROMOTION OF EDUCATION
AT THE WEST;

WITH
TWO ADDRESSES, DELIVERED AT ITS ORGANIZATION,
BY THE REV. EDWARD BEECHER, D.D.,
AND
REV. E. N. KIRK.



BOSTON:
PRINTED BY HENRY MASON, 118 STATE STREET.
1846.

1852, June 10

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Rev C. C. Everett

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HISTORY.

The book published last summer, entitled "The Duty of American Women to their Country," having been read by ladies of different denominations, in Boston and elsewhere, a simultaneous wish was expressed to take immediate action on the subject of sending pious female teachers to the West.

When the Mission Sewing Circle connected with Mount Vernon Church and Society met, in October, to organize for the winter, this subject was presented, and a few ladies agreed to meet at an early day to converse, and, if possible, lay some plan for a future society to be organized. This informal meeting was held at Deacon Safford's, October 22, and about twenty ladies were present. All appeared deeply interested, and expressed a wish to do something at once for the object, but no one felt prepared to tell how to begin. However, before they separated, the ladies chose one of their number a committee to seek for the knowledge so much needed, and, if able to obtain it, the Committee was authorized to call a meeting and report.

The following week this Committee conversed with several of the city pastors, and with a large number of the most influential ladies connected with churches of various denominations in the city. The pastors expressed an interest in the enterprize, and a willingness to do all they could to promote it, but were not prepared to mark out any precise course for the ladies to pursue.

The ladies, also, expressed a strong interest in the cause, and wished to make an immediate effort. At the suggestion of one of the pastors, the Committee wrote to Professor Stowe, of Lane Seminary, a member of the Central Committee at Cincinnati. The Professor returned an immediate answer, urging the ladies to make a beginning with as little delay as possible.

Another informal meeting was soon called, and ladies of several churches invited to attend it. Four of the Congregational Churches of this city were represented. After a very free conversation, it was unanimously agreed to form a Society for selecting, aiding, and sending pious female teachers to the West, as soon as suitable preparations could be made.

It was not thought to be expedient to embrace all denominations in one organization, as each denomination would be likely to labor more harmoniously and efficiently by itself.

At this meeting the ladies instructed their former Committee to write to all her acquaintance among pastors, home missionaries, and Christian friends, at the West, and request their aid in finding good locations for female schools, and a respectable home for those young ladies who may be willing to go out as teachers.

A large number of letters has been forwarded to the West, and some answers, full of encouragement, have

been received, and it is presumed that many others are now on their way.

A meeting, preparatory to the organization of a Society, was held at Deacon Safford's, January 28, at which eight Congregational Churches in Boston were represented. This meeting was conducted with the greatest harmony, and all its proceedings marked with perfect unanimity.

Letters from Dr. Beecher, of Cincinnati, Professor Stowe, of Lane Seminary, and others, were read; and some articles of agreement were presented, and very closely investigated; and finally a unanimous opinion was expressed that a Society, embracing Congregationalists only, in New England, be organized on the 4th of February, 1846.

The Rev. Edward Beecher, D.D., and the Rev. E. N. Kirk, were invited to address the meeting at the time of organization, and an invitation was sent to all the Pastors of Congregational Churches in the city to attend, and recommend the object of the Society to the confidence and support of their congregations. The meeting was then dissolved.

ORGANIZATION.

"THE LADIES' SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF EDUCATION AT THE WEST" was organized, in the Mount Vernon Chapel, in Boston, February 4, 1846.

The meeting was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Blagden.

The history of the origin and progress of the Society, and some letters from the West, were read by the Rev. Mr. Kirk.

The annexed Constitution was then read and adopted, and the following Board of Managers elected; after which interesting addresses were made by Dr. Edward Beecher and Rev. Mr. Kirk.

Officers.

Mrs. SAMUEL HUBBARD, President.
 Mrs. WM. G. LAMBERT, Vice-President.
 Mrs. HENRY M. HOLBROOK, Vice-President.
 Miss CATHERINE SCOLLAY, Treasurer.
 Miss SARAH TUTTLE, Secretary.

Managers.

Park Street Church — Mrs. WM. T. EUSTIS and Mrs. L. M. STIMPSON.
 Bowdoin Street „ — Mrs. MOSES L. HALE and Mrs. J. BANCROFT.
 Old South „ — Mrs. CHARLES STODDARD and Mrs. PICKENS.
 Essex Street „ — Mrs. WILKINSON and Mrs. STEEL.
 Pine Street „ — Mrs. ELIPH. KIMBALL and Mrs. WILLET.
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 Salem Street „ — Mrs. L. J. JARVIS and Mrs. J. B. BUCK.
 Mount Vernon „ — Mrs. G. W. CROCKETT and Mrs. D. SAFFORD.

Executive Committee.

Mrs. SAMUEL HUBBARD, Park Street.
 Mrs. WILLIAM G. LAMBERT, Bowdoin Street.
 Mrs. HENRY M. HOLBROOK, Old South.
 Mrs. WILLIAM T. EUSTIS, Park Street.
 Mrs. DANIEL SAFFORD, Mount Vernon.
 Miss CATHERINE SCOLLAY, Mount Vernon.
 Miss SARAH TUTTLE, Mount Vernon.

DR. BEECHER'S ADDRESS.

I rejoice to see this day and this meeting ; for it is the first effort to take hold with system of a department too long neglected, — the organization of females, and the systematized application of female power in the great work of Education, especially at the West.

I say too long neglected — I mean by us Protestants, for by the Romanists it has not been neglected. One of the wisest and most powerful parts of that system is the organized use that it makes of the female mind in this great work.

I hold in my hands a full development of their system in this particular in our country, as exhibited in the Metropolitan Catholic Almanac for the present year, from which I shall make some statements of facts as I proceed.

Of all departments of benevolent enterprize at the West, education is the most important. The end of all our efforts should be to make the West a self-educating and self-supplying community. It is in vain to think of supplying them permanently with ministers and teachers from the East. Unless, therefore, a complete system of education is organized, all other efforts must fail.

Nor is it enough to provide colleges, and theological seminaries, to educate men — the work is but half done if the female mind is not elevated in the same proportion as that of the other sex. And whose duty is it, if not of

females situated as those of New England are, to see that it is done?

And yet no organized effort has ever been made by them to do anything of this kind for the West. For example: We have labored to establish a theological seminary at Cincinnati, and a college at Crawfordsville, in Indiana; but no organized effort has been made to sustain female schools. Meantime the Catholics have been indefatigable. The results are as might have been expected. The following extract from a letter to Mrs. Stowe, taken from the 'New York Evangelist,' will present the matter in a vivid light:—

"I have just laid aside the volume entitled 'The Duty of American Women to their Country,' and take up my pen to address you on the subject. Our common schools in this State are in a deplorable condition, and few *competent* teachers are to be found among us. But I write especially to inquire for teachers for a Female High School. *I know of no Protestant Female Institution in the State*, where a young lady can receive a thorough education. The Catholic female institution at St. Mary's has a large number of young ladies from this part of the State. A number of our students in our colleges have sisters there; but they are not satisfied, and only go there because they know not where else to go to finish their education. Had we only suitable accommodations and teachers here, scholars would not be wanting."

Mrs. Stowe proceeds:—

"A clergyman in Indiana states, also, that many of the daughters of their most influential political men are at Catholic seminaries, and that he could not prevent even the members of his own church from doing the same thing, because, as they said, 'there were no other good schools.' Thus the wives and mothers of the future chief men of that state are being trained by Catholics."

Of what use is it now to go on and educate one-half of the community, and then, by leaving the other half in the hands of the Catholics, to undo all that we have been laboring to effect? for it is impossible to rear a Protestant nation without Protestant mothers.

I do not say that no efforts have been made by female enterprize to establish schools at the West—honorable efforts have been made; but they have been individual efforts, and in a work of this kind the organized power of the Roman Catholic Church will tire out individual effort.

Look now and see what the Catholics have been doing in this same State of Indiana, where there is not one good Protestant female high school. Though the Catholic population of the State is but 25,000, they have four female seminaries established at the most important points in the State:—at Fort Wayne, and at Vincennes, and at Jasper, Dubois Co., and at Madison, and one near Terra Haute; and this is but a specimen of what they are doing all over the West. Indeed, out of sixty-eight Catholic female seminaries, forty-five are at the West. What does this look like but a deliberate purpose to proselyte the West, by the power of the female mind?

Nor are such efforts to be despised. The power of highly-educated female minds is immense. It is not obtruded and forced on our notice as is that of men, but it is real, deep, and all-pervading. I never enter a female seminary without feeling that the ruling minds of a nation are as really trained there as in our colleges and theological seminaries; indeed, without them we have but half a system, and the power of every great movement is paralyzed.

By the formation of this Society a great vacuum in our plans is filled. It is the first organization of Eastern

females to undertake the great work of education at the West. May God grant that it be not the last. May its influence extend, till all the Protestant female mind of the East be organized, and devoted to the great work of educating the West. It is all, and more than all, needed to meet the efforts of our crafty antagonists.

We have very inadequate ideas of what they are doing in this way. Females are organized into various orders, bound together by sacred vows for life. In the name of the order, an appeal is made to some principle of imagination or sympathy, or sacred emotion—as in the order of the “Sacred Heart,” or “Holy Blood,” &c. There is a mother-house, and branches of this are established all over the nation.

Thus near Emmetsburg, Maryland, is the Mother-house of the Sisters of Charity, numbering at present one hundred and eleven. Besides this, there are two hundred and fifty-seven employed as missionaries and teachers through our land. They have thirty-seven establishments under their care.

What permanency and power is there in one such organization! Nothing is left to individual enterprise; each in every order is strengthened by the power of the whole church. And what a place of power does that female fill who is at the head of one of these orders, and has her eye upon so wide a field of action, with power to direct so many educated, devoted, and enterprising female minds!

There is, indeed, an element of power in their system that we reject as fraught with ruinous consequences on the great scale—I mean celibacy; yet it is an element of great power, as it renders their organizations independent, permanent, and complete.

But organizations like this, if widely extended, and vigorously used, by the Protestant female world, may be

made more than a counterpoise to this peculiar Roman Catholic power. To the Protestant females, then, of these Eastern States I would say, Organize — organize — and bring your combined power to bear on the education of the West. It is a field that above all others calls for your labors.

Two things there exist — a present inability to act for themselves, and a great susceptibility of influence if acted on. They are unable to act, because society is new, the community weak, the materials heterogeneous, and those who are fit to lead in the work of forming systems of education are in the minority. Yet they are susceptible of influence, for the prevailing spirit of the age calls for Education, and the desire of local improvement leads every community to favor efforts to establish educational institutions.

If any suggest, Wait till they are able to establish their own institutions, — I reply, If we wait, the Papacy will not. If we sleep, the enemy will sow tares. If any still suggest, there is no religious danger from the educational efforts of the Catholics, read the following extract from the article already referred to: —

“ Among the printed regulations of these schools we find these: ‘ All the young ladies are required to conform to the public worship of the house’ (i.e., to join in worshipping the Virgin and Saints), ‘ but no *undue* influence is exerted over their religious principles.’ ‘ All written communications are subject to the inspection of the tutoress.’ ”

What is not undue influence may be learned from Bishop Smith, and others who receive pupils who have previously attended such schools. The influence there exerted, they affirm, “ ordinarily produces one of three results — either a change to Catholicism, or great con-

tempt for Protestant opinions and practises, or reckless infidelity and hatred of all religion."

But we do not need such facts; the nature of the case shows that the Catholic educational system is expressly designed as a part of a great system of proselytism—and will it not be used for its real end? In view of these facts, it has been well said, "It is equally bad taste and bad Christianity to revile and sneer—as many seem disposed to do—at such efforts of the Catholic church." A gentleman of intelligence recently remarked, with regard to the Catholics and Protestants at the West, "The Catholics *work*, but the Protestants scold: of course the Catholics advance the quickest." Now this is not true in every department of effort; but, unfortunately, in regard to education it is true. There is no Protestant denomination, either at the East or the West, that is even *beginning* to do in this field what the Catholics are doing, nor any that might not with great advantage take a lesson from them. As long as this is so, of course the Catholics will succeed, for the laws of God's system are on their side.

But if Protestant females will take hold of the work, in good earnest, they can easily surpass the Catholics. True, the unity and centralization of their system, and their principles of celibacy, give them for a time vast power, but they will ultimately ruin the system to which they belong. We have renounced and abhor them.

But we have unspeakable advantages over them if we will use them aright. The nature and history of our institutions are a constant force on our side, and against them. There is great power of enterprise and action in innumerable female hearts scattered through our land, and it needs only to be called out and organized. For us, too, and against them, are the Gospel, revivals, and the Holy Spirit. The whole history, too, of the world is

on our side. That system has been tried for ages, and it has never touched a community but to wither, to blast, and to curse. A full exhibition of its history by God would bring on its day of judgment and burn it with fire. Be strong, therefore, and fear not. Be strong—not in your own strength, but in the strength of God. Count the cost, and aim at great things, and expect great things. Your first beginnings may be small, but they involve great principles; and future ages may unfold, as the result of this meeting, consequences of which you would hardly dare this day to dream.

REV. MR. KIRK'S ADDRESS.

If not pledged to express my views, I would add nothing to this powerful appeal. You have now seen the necessity of organization, if it were merely in self-defence. Considered only intellectually, and in a practical point of view, Romanism is a perfect specimen of moral machinery. Here is, indeed, a system of female propagandism powerful enough to arouse the friends of truth and freedom to vigilance and action. "Sisters of the Sacred Heart!" "Sisters of the Most Precious Blood!" watchwords to make Protestants smile, but to kindle an undying enthusiasm in the hearts of women whose religious sentiments have become as absorbing and fervent as they are superstitious. A "Mother-house" in Maryland!—centralization, organization, system, and tact, are ever in the Roman movements. Had they but the truth and the Spirit of God with them, how resistless would their efforts be! And if the friends of truth mean to maintain it against delusion and falsehood, they must take lessons of their enemies. But this ground has been

sufficiently explored to-day. I would call upon you to glance at a still broader view of the occasion for such an organization as we have now made.

I. The religious education of a large portion of our country must at present be secured by the voluntary efforts of the Church.

That we must be religiously educated as a nation, I take to be a conceded point of our political creed. But how is it to be brought about? The Puritan spirit is no longer in the governments nor the people. Education does not hold the place with us which the Fathers assigned it in the social system; and Religion does not now hold the place in Education which they assigned it. The Western people, with some most interesting exceptions, are adventurous and enterprising chiefly in reference to acquisition and political power, and the immigrants from Europe are almost entirely an encumbrance in this matter. Hence it is an ascertained fact, that 2,000,000 children are destitute of any education. Mere compassion might induce us to furnish them the means of mental culture; but the Providence of God is appealing to us by yet higher considerations. The great interests of Truth and Freedom turn, to a considerable extent, on this point, — whether the children of the poor shall receive any, and what, education. Never was there a better opportunity to make the experiment of the value of a Scriptural education. But the opportunity for the experiment must be embraced by us now, or perhaps lost for generations to come.

Much has been said concerning the importance of universal education in a republic; but enough has not yet been said. Our free institutions are resting on 20,000,000 people, of whom 1,500,000 cannot read, and of whom 2,500,000 children have no school. In Ohio, the most enlightened State of the West, one-third have

no school privileges. What, then, must be the condition of Indiana, Illinois, and others? In Virginia one-fourth of the white population cannot write their names in applying for the marriage license. In the whole Southern States one-half of the white children have no schools.

Now who is to look after this multitude of embryo citizens? The mere patriot ought to say, Things shall not remain so. But Christians surely should determine to bring about a change. The evangelical churches of our country ought at once to send forth two grades of pious teachers, for the higher and lower branches of instruction, to the number of 50,000, under a system as complete as that of the Home Missionary Society; ready to compete with the best teachers that Rome can furnish, and to give an opportunity to all the uneducated children of our country to receive a Christian education. We should support them among the poor, just as we sustain our Missionaries,—by helping those who will help themselves. And, besides these, we are deeply interested in sending out a considerable number of the more accomplished teachers. This is much needed, in order to remove the reason now assigned for sending the children of the better classes to the Roman schools. The Western people cannot yet furnish themselves with the higher class of female schools, to compete with those of the Romanists.

II. *But why should the women of New England, particularly, organize a Society for that purpose?*

Because there is, by reason of commerce and emigration, a surplus of nearly 20,000 females in New England, who can never become the heads of families if this disproportion continues; and yet whose talents might accomplish much for the world's good, if they could find employment. Very many of them are longing for an opportunity to do good, without seeing how they can accomplish much. It seems to be a merciful provision

for hundreds of well educated Christian young women, whose sex forbids their adventuring as their brothers do, and yet who, if such a Society will encourage them, and send them forth, may go cheerfully and understandingly right to the best spot for them in all that wide region. Many may find themselves unprepared for the Foreign Service, who yet would most thankfully accept your aid and counsel in choosing the sphere of their labors in the mission-field of the Great Valley. New England is constantly elevating the standard of Female Education, and sending forth a number of highly educated young women; but many—most of them—are unable to meet the expenses of a journey to the West. They must be furnished with the means of making this long journey; and all need the aid which this Society may furnish, in selecting their respective fields of labor. In fact, this is one of the most interesting features of this organization, that it selects the sites for establishing schools. The Papists have laid out the West with the experienced eye of generals: we can compete with them only by an equally judicious choice of position and designation of labors.

And there is, moreover, a special propriety in sending well educated and pious women. You see the Romanists know what to do with female talent. I respect them for their good sense in a bad cause. There are defects (peculiar, at least in degree) in the Western character, for which our Christian sisters may furnish a remedy. There is a great lack of reverence, of the domestic affections, of self-control, of faith in God and spiritual things. No better substitute can be found for a correct maternal and domestic influence in these matters than woman's gentleness, exerted in the daily intercourse of a teacher. No better aid to the faithful missionary and colporteur can be sent than the pious teacher, who shall be able to take even a maternal care of the little children;

who may impart many valuable lessons to poor families, in domestic economy ; whose gentleness, and kindness, and dignity, and good sense, and piety, may give her the confidence and esteem of persons of all parties.

There is, moreover, another very cogent consideration : — the men could not be found in sufficient numbers to do this work, while so many avenues to wealth and distinction are opening to the youth of this country. And the economy of this movement must recommend it, since woman either desires or needs a smaller compensation for services than man.

Such is an unembellished statement of the considerations which appear to me to commend this Society to the favor of our churches. If any complain of the multiplication of societies, they may complain of the whole movement of Providence. God is calling to more effort, and more sacrifice ; and the larger part of it can be more effectively accomplished through organizations. The very fact that Rome is so multiplying her machinery in this country, is an indication that we must change our tactics, and meet her on her ground, and adapt our modes of defence to her attacks.

It may be suggested by some that this institution is about to bring woman out of her sphere into too much publicity. There is not a branch of all this business that will require any ladies' speeches, or any other appearance of ladies in public than is sanctioned by the best usages of society. If a department of finance and agency should be needed in the progress of the Society, a sufficient number of competent men will be very ready to constitute a committee for that purpose. In the West the Home Missionaries, and other intelligent friends, will doubtless do all that may be necessary in securing the proper selection of places for your teachers, and their proper reception and protection there.

CONSTITUTION
OF
The Ladies' Society for the Promotion of Education
AT
THE WEST.

ARTICLE I.

This Society shall be called, "The Ladies' Society for the Promotion of Education at the West."

ARTICLE II.

The object of this Society is to send to the Western States competent female teachers, of unquestionable piety, belonging to Congregational churches in New England.

ARTICLE III.

The officers of the Society shall be,—a President, two Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, and Twenty Managers. These shall constitute a Board of Directors, five of whom shall form a quorum. From this Board an Executive Committee of Seven shall be chosen annually.

ARTICLE IV.

It shall be the duty of the President to call, and preside at, Meetings of the Board, each of which is to be opened with prayer.

ARTICLE V.

In the absence of the President, it shall be the duty of the senior Vice-President to preside, and perform the duties of President.

ARTICLE VI.

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to keep a record of all the proceedings, and be the organ of communication with Auxiliary Societies and with individuals; and she shall perform any other duties the Board of Directors may assign.

ARTICLE VII.

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive all subscriptions, and donations of moneys or other property; to keep account thereof, and make a report to the Society at the annual meeting. She will keep a catalogue of members, life members, and donors.

ARTICLE VIII.

The Board of Managers shall meet quarterly, to hear statements from the Executive Committee, and give counsel on such points as may be submitted to them. They shall collect funds in their respective churches and congregations, and pay over the same to the Treasurer, at the stated meetings of the Board. They shall have power to fill any vacancies which may occur among their members.

ARTICLE IX.

The Executive Committee shall have charge of the special business of the Society, and shall have power to call their own meetings; to fill any vacancies which may occur among their members; to appropriate funds as shall be needed between the quarterly meetings; and to make rules for the selection of teachers, and for their transportation and location. Three of this Committee shall form a quorum.

ARTICLE X.

Any lady may become a member of this Society by the payment of not less than *One Dollar* per annum; and any person paying, at any one time, *Twenty Dollars* shall become a Member for Life.

ARTICLE XI.

As the object of this Society is to send Female Teachers to the West, from the Congregational Churches in every part of New England, it will need—and it invites—the co-operation of Ladies in the New England States ; and any Association of Ladies formed for the same object with this Society, and annually paying into its treasury, will receive an Annual Report of its Proceedings.

ARTICLE XII.

Alterations shall not be made in this Constitution, except at the Annual Meeting of the Society, and not without the recommendation of the Board of Directors.



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